Dear Jim, 3/14/74

Not since Lil and I were first married have I eaten Chinese. Then I had little choice because the restaurant in which we ate so often was a Chinese Chinese restaurant. We were about the only non-Chinese customers. (Ditto for an Armenian, a Greek and with the exception of a single employee not always there, a Syrian restaurant. In the Greek one we went into the kitchen and pointed at pots, always with misgivings but never with regret.) So, I'll enjoy reading the book, which came today, and those other benefits which can flow from Lil's use, to which she looks forward. She was quite happy to see it waiting for her.

I may well have desecrated it and the art it embodies. Since getting your note I've been wondering where the hell I'd get a wok. I rarely drive to Washington, no longer know anyone in Chinatown there, if much of it remains where it was. And I didn't want to ask you to go to any trouble. Particularly not with what we've been getting of your strikes and everyone's energy problems (mine increased cost only).

So, I went out and got the only wok in town. An electric one.

It wasn't even in town. It was in the suburbs.

I hope it has the little shovel. The carton is sealed and I don't know.

Until hearing that of all places Montgomery Ward had them all I'd been able to think of I didn't want to do, ask our local Chinese restaurateur, Mr. Miao, if he could get one from his New York supplier. I feared that he would not want me to repay him. (He really is much indebted to Lil but I'm not about to suggest it or exploit it or let him exploit himself. Except for the occasional meal, which hardly equals what she does free, so I don't feel badly about that. Besides, I like the way he invites her and tells her she can bring me and more, that he sent her the Xmas card, as I recall Mrs. and Mrs. Lillian Weisberg.)

When I told Jim and May Lesar that this good Chinese cookbook existed, both were interested. May comes from an upper-class Singapore family and if she cooked much when she was young probably hasn't since starting college here. Or since entering practise. Jim is the hamburger type. I'll show it to them when they are here again.

So, thanks for the thoughtfulness.

We now both have another reason for looking forward to the end of the tax season. This has been her toughest one yet.

Paul Valentine phoned suppertime yesterday. He had a paper from the Zippies, or Skolnick's stormtrooping variant of the Yippies. Farout "solutions" of WG and JFK offing. Those tramps are really Hunt and Fiorini and Velle spent the night in the Depository and he shot from there, then escaped (I suppose the Craig story). Who needs fact when he has A Big Head? Craziest yet. Skolnick could be put permanently out of business by a libel suit and there can't be anything more libellous than this. Can he be so crazy he doesn't know this? Next we'll hear that they are being suppressed, if any talk shows will take him again.

If craziness were the only possibility it would be easier.

Do you know if Mexico City has anything like the city directory that is published here? And if so where one is? (Not counting the embassy in DC.) Two friends who I'd expected to check have returned from vacation there without looking into this because the wife got sick, so they came back after enjoying the countryside, not Mexico City.

Except that neither Bud nor his client can behave or be human for very long and the thumb makes violent protest if touched, all is quiet. It is wearing and wearying to have to fight people to help them and one of these times I'm just going to chuck it. Takes too much time from other things. And it looks like it will continue for too long. Not a good career. If Bud's periods of reasonableness can't last a week, and this last one didn't...